

# Strategies and Tactics of Evaluative Discourse

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## ABSTRACT

The investigation involves the analysis and description of communicative strategies and tactics within evaluative discourse. Evaluative discourse is understood as a complex communicative phenomenon that includes, in addition to linguistic, extralinguistic factors (knowledge about the world, sociocultural characteristics, opinions and intentions of people) necessary to create an evaluative influence. Evaluative strategies and tactics used in the discourse are considered to be signals of a particular topic. The essence of communicative competence is explained by the theory of human being's cognitive and pragmatic activity. Communicative competence is an extralinguistic notion. It falls within the area of pragmatics. It refers to person's ability to communicate the intended meaning in an actual interlocution. The piece of writing proposes the communicative approach to the research of evaluative strategies and tactics for reflection the peculiarities of communicative process. The types of evaluative discourse are given; its development forecast is presented. The results obtained validate the thought that evaluative strategies and tactics should be investigated comprehensively and deeply as phenomena which represent the facts of communication in different types of evaluative discourse.

**Keywords:** *strategy, tactics, evaluative discourse, communication, competence, interlocution*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Communication and communicative competence are incessantly studied by various disciplines such as linguistics, education, artificial intelligence, media, etc. The continuous interest in communication is due to its involvement in virtually all aspects of human interaction. Actually, human communication is complex on the linguistic, pragmatic, cognitive, social and emotional levels [1]. This is what makes human beings and human interaction worth continuous investigation.

Generally speaking, communicative competence covers four main aspects, namely, 1 – grammatical competence, which deals with syntax; 2 – sociolinguistic competence, which covers social appropriateness of communication; 3 – discourse competence that covers cohesion and coherence in discourse; and 4 – strategic competence, which focuses on the pragmatic function of communication. The first three aspects have received great attention by many scholars interested in the study of language, linguistics and particularly in the study of second language learning and acquisition. However, the fourth aspect is, so far, rather a neglected area.

It is hypothesized that in case of communication interruption or failure the interlocutors may opt for another strategy that is considered to be appropriate to attain the purpose of the interlocution. In case the strategy fails, they can opt for another, which is more affective and more appropriate.

Modern communicative and pragmatically oriented linguistics, focusing on discursive research, analyzes both the communicative process itself and its participants – the addresser and addressee. In particular, the question of choosing communicative strategies and tactics [2] is of current interest for linguists. Evaluative (axiological) strategies and tactics can be considered a variety of communicative strategies and tactics, which analysis remains far from complete, since we have few scientific researches in this area [3].

The **object** of this article is the examination of pragmatic peculiarities of the evaluative discourse.

The **purpose** of this paper is to provide a linguistic analysis for strategies and tactics used in the evaluative discourse.

The use of a theoretical and methodological apparatus developed by communicative, cognitive and pragmatic linguistics opens up new perspectives in the study of the features of realization of evaluative strategies and tactics. They are considered to be speech steps aimed at the realization of intermediate communicative goals within discourse.

The **methodology** that is in use in the study is based on the fundamental points of the theory of Discourse and Pragmatics.

A complete and thorough explanation of evaluative processes can be made with the help of the cognitive discourse approach, offered by Koubriakova [4], which allows for the interpretation of evaluative patterns from the point of view of the cognitive and communicative functions they perform.

Discourse analysis seeks to describe and explain linguistic phenomena in terms of the affective, cognitive, situational, and cultural contexts of their use and to identify linguistic resources through which we (re)construct our life (our identity, role, activity, community, emotion, stance, knowledge, belief, ideology, and so forth) [5].

## **2. BACKGROUND**

### ***2.1. Problem of Contemporary Discourse in Linguistics***

The term “discourse” has a long history. It appeared far back in the Latin language as “*discursus*” and meant “to run back and forth” that time [6]. At the present time, this notion became fixed in all the humanities and political studies and still is keeping its successful movement on in different areas of the human knowledge.

The end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was marked with the emergence of the new scientific paradigm: functionalism together with cognitive science were recognized as a new trend in linguistics. The presentation of every new knowledge paradigm is always linked to reassessment of those heritages, which it gains, from the preceding paradigms and chiefly from fundamental ideas comprising the topical area in science. Such state of affairs has also influenced the definition of language in the cognitive science, which considers it as an access arrangement to the brain’s functions, mental activity and processes performed by the individual.

In this new paradigm, the language is understood as a specific sign system, which allows the person to treat their own kind for the purpose to exchange the information or to apply it any other way and provides us with different types of human behavior studies in general [7]. Through this viewpoint, the language serves as whether the means to a certain cognitive end within communicative processes, or as a medium of communication aimed at the explanation and solution of particular communicative tasks.

Many of the present-day scholars note that the analysis of discourse is focused on the linguistic knowledge based on the level above words, phrases or sentences and, mainly, on the context of not only linguistic, but also extralinguistic nature [8], [9]. Obviously, the language is not just a simple mirror image, because the language reflects the world, but, at the same time, influences the environment around us. A basic point in the discursive analysis is that it considers the language as an essential part within the constructive human life perspective. Thus, to examine the discourse it is considerably necessary to understand that the environment is created by the discourse that we use.

Exploring discourse, linguistics does not overlook its main object, the language at all. Discourse is a new element in the manifestation of the Language, “as it appeared before the end of the 20th century” [10]. In the image of discourse, the language turned to the linguist with its

unusually complex dynamic side. It requires a search for new approaches and methods that are different from traditional ones.

Now, there is no consensus on the definition of discourse and its typology. It can be explained by the fact that the typology of discourse, like any other classification, can be built on various grounds.

The discourse contains linguistic and extralinguistic components, and it manifests and functions in communication, which always takes place in a certain social space. As a result, discourse analysis is characterized by consideration not of discourse in general, but of a particular discourse. The latter refers to something spoken on a common given topic at a certain time interval.

Discourse has certain properties, or components: the addressee, the addresser, the goal, the time frame, the social context. It must be noted that valencies of “what”, “how” and “about” are obligatory in identifying the type of discourse, because they serve as the object of linguistic research [11].

Halliday characterizes discourse through the parameters “participants”, “theme”, “method” [12]. The topic of discourse is understood as the sphere of social interaction, in which participants operate with the language as the main means of cooperation. Discourse participants are considered together with all the status and role objectives, socially significant relationships in which they are involved.

The method of discourse is the function itself, performed through the use of language to achieve a particular aim, the formal and informative organization of the text, the channel of its representation (oral or written), its communicative purpose (motivation, persuasion, explanation).

In our opinion, the parameter “theme” is one of the traditional and main criteria for the classification of discourses in modern linguistic studies. Among the most common in the special literature there exist the following types of discourses by this criterion: pedagogical, political, scientific, critical, ethical, legal, military, parental, etc. This classification can complement business, mass information, medical, and other types of discourse. This inventory has an open character as the subject or theme of discourse can be any area of human activity.

Speaking about the types of discourse in the framework of any national-cultural community, Krasnukh [13] emphasizes that “modifications” of the latter, which are “adapted” in a certain way in accordance with the sphere in which it functions may be included in this list.

It can even be said that varieties of discourse are determined by human activities, because each activity generates its own type of discourse with its own vocabulary and style. Thus, everyday communication on everyday topics generates everyday and colloquial discourse, criminal activity represents a specific criminal discourse, which can be attributed to argotic discourse [14].

By discourse, we mean “speech, considered as a purposeful social action, as a component participating in the relationships of people and the mechanisms of their

consciousness (cognitive processes), as speech “immersed in life” [15].

## **2.2. Communicative Competence**

Communication could be described as a two-way process through which an exchange of meaningful messages takes place between interlocutors, involving thoughts, ideas, concepts, feelings, etc., towards a mutually accepted goal to create shared understanding. It is a process in which a meaningful and relevant message is encoded and imparted by an addresser to (an) addressee(s) via a channel. The addressee is expected to decode the message and to provide the addresser with a feedback showing the act of correct decoding. Communication may be verbal or non verbal so long as a meaningful message is transmitted effectively.

Communicative competence is an extralinguistic term, precisely speaking, it falls within the sphere of pragmatics. It refers to one's ability to communicate the intended meaning in an actual interlocution.

The concept of “communicative competence” covers four major aspects, which have received considerable attention in language studies and literacy education in general. Yet, little attention is given to the ability of employing different strategies and tactics in human communication.

The understanding of communicative competence has been influenced by pragmatics and the philosophy of language, with a focus on speech acts as largely described by Austin [16] and Searle [17].

Le [18] agrees with this classification and proposes that the concept of communicative competence covers the following main aspects:

1. Grammatical competence (traditionally dealing with syntax).
2. Sociolinguistic competence (dealing with social appropriateness of communication).
3. Discourse competence (dealing with cohesion and coherence in discourse).
4. Strategic competence (focusing on pragmatic function of communication).

The study of pragmatics has added a significant contribution to the concept of communicative competence. Pragmatic competence is meant to emphasize not only the notion of appropriateness of language in its social context, but also the function of language use in order to achieve communicative goals.

In communicative interaction, communication strategies are often used, since communication is basically functional. Communication is not only concerned with what a message is about but also with what a message intends to achieve, i.e., the intended meaning is the focus [19]. Communication strategies are daily used in every aspect of life, e.g., at home, at work, etc.

In pragmatics, the ability of the addressee(s) to understand the addresser's message is referred to as illocutionary competence, and the addresser's intention in producing an utterance as the illocutionary force. The pragmatic aspects of communicative competence are concerned with the

addresser's ability to employ linguistic knowledge in a variety of social contexts and situational interactions to communicate the intended meaning, and the ability of the addressee to use the knowledge to grasp the intended meaning.

In order to achieve this in an interaction, the interlocutors use communication strategies which serve to uphold the communication. The strategies differ according to the needs and the intentions of the interlocutors, ranging between praising, appealing, justifying, conditioning, negotiating, promising, threatening, controlling, etc. [20]. In case a certain strategy does not achieve the communicative purpose, it is inferred that the addresser may select another one to maintain the communication or to reach the desired aim.

Nowadays linguists emphasize that at the present time it is highly important to develop the strategies and tactics of communication because language changes can also activate social changes [21].

By the very definition of activities, discourse is a kind of instrument that serves to accomplish a definite task. Naturally, for its implementation, it must have an established set of attributes used in a certain way when the discourse appears in the specified function.

The use of certain properties of discourse in the process of communicative and cognitive activity is called the communicative-cognitive organization of discourse. The application of global properties of discourse, correlated with its status as an integral communicative-cognitive means, is defined as discourse strategies, and certain actions with discourse elements are called tactics.

The notion of a strategy is defined by linguists as “a property of a plan, that is, a (cognitive) representation of an action sequence that will be executed. It is that property of a plan that guarantees that the action sequence is carried out effectively and optimally, given the (known or assumed) circumstances of the action context” [22]. As a result, the strategy includes a number of actions. They are aimed at reaching the certain communicative goal.

“The tactic must be considered as one or several verbal actions which promote the realization of a strategy” [23]. Thus the strategy may contain a number of tactics.

Thus, a communicative strategy is a model of speech behavior of a subject of communication in the context of social interaction, aimed at achieving communicative goals and objectives and expressed by specific language means. Tactics of communication aimed at the implementation of these strategies.

## **2.3. Strategies and Tactics Used in Evaluative Discourse**

Nearly every discourse contains evaluative lexemes. Therefore, there is no doubt that the evaluation discourse is realized in a monologue and dialogue with the help of various utterances that actualize the assessment explicitly or implicitly, depending on the intention of the speaker and the behavior of the listener. It is the identification of

evaluative semantics at the paradigmatic and syntagmatic levels allows describing the evaluation discourse adequately.

By evaluative discourse, we understand a complex communicative phenomenon that includes, in addition to linguistic, extralinguistic factors (knowledge about the world, sociocultural characteristics, opinions and intentions of people) necessary to create an evaluative influence.

Evaluative influence is realized with the help of strategies and tactics, the study of which is the aim of this article.

Any discourse, especially an evaluative one, is aimed at suggestion by its nature. As a result, it takes into account the potential interpreter's system of views in order to modify the intentions, opinions and motivation of the audience's actions. To achieve this goal, the speaker must skillfully adhere to the basic communicative strategy of discourse, as well as skillfully combine tactics, including them in the composition of this strategy and thus complementing and modifying it to realize specific personal goals.

Evaluation discourse, like any type of discourse, is characterized by its connection with the dominant theme and the communicative situation, dynamism, social labeling (due to status, intentions, psychological characteristics of interlocutors), heterogeneity, actualization of both linguistic and non-linguistic factors, genre form of existence.

However, in relation to the evaluative discourse, we can talk about the presence of a special, evaluative speech situation, the speaker's specific intentions, using the evaluative factor as an achievement of goals and objectives of communication, as well as about the special role of the value system and the emotional mood of communicants in the process of communication.

Thus, the following possible aspects of its study can be distinguished:

- 1) the evaluative speech situation (including its context: linear and vertical);
- 2) the communicative parameters of the speaker (his presuppositions, intentions, emotional state, etc.);
- 3) the communicative parameters of the addressee (presupposition, emotional state, attitude to the speaker, degree of awareness, etc.);
- 4) interpersonal relations of communicants;
- 5) development, internal organization of discourse and the use of evaluative means in it.

In this complex of problems, the linguist is primarily interested in the choice of linguistic appraisal means, their distribution in the structure of discourse and peculiarities of functioning in connection with the solution of certain communicative tasks, that is, study a language in action, in life.

It should be noted that it is discourse analysis that gives a complete picture of the functioning of evaluative units. This analysis shows how these units influence the transfer of ideas and beliefs and what means and in what cases should be used.

As it was already declared that the study of strategies and tactics of human speech behavior causes a lot of disputes.

In the evaluative discourse a strategy is a type of speech behavior, a property of cognitive plans, a set of macro objectives, a certain sequence of speech actions organized for achieving the purpose of evaluative interaction, a certain direction of speech behavior in a given situation in order to realize the goal of communication. Strategies implement a common communication plan, its ultimate purpose; tactics fulfill the function of implementing speech strategies through specific speech steps.

Speech strategy is a complex of speech actions aimed at achieving a communicative goal. In the evaluative discourse it is a cognitive communication plan, through which the most advantageous solution of the communicative tasks of the speaker is controlled in the context of a lack of information about the partner's actions. Speech tactics should be considered one or more actions that contribute to the implementation of the strategy.

All speech strategies and tactics used in the evaluative discourse are divided into two groups: semantic and pragmatic. The semantic strategies include the persuasion strategy and the discredit strategy, and the pragmatic ones include the emotive-tuning strategies and the self-presentation strategy.

Evaluative strategies include:

- 1) dynamism (the author's action, which determines the form of discourse);
- 2) informational content (conscious transfer of information to the partner of the communicative act). It must be noted that such transfer is a component of a holistic communicative action aimed at achieving a certain objective (in this case, the representation of the evaluative relationship between interlocutors);
- 3) activation (a certain result, which is reflected in the anticipated action of the interlocutor);
- 4) the perspective of discourse (focus on the performance of the supertask). The perspective outlines the location of the language material and the way it is designed (the greater or lesser brightness of separate parts of the discourse), the emphasis in terms of evaluation, the detail or schematic study;
- 5) the effectiveness of discourse (in contrast to dynamism corresponds to the chain of facts that make up the content of the latter).

In the discourse evaluative strategies are recorded as signals of a particular topic. Location of such signals in a discourse has a specific purpose: if thematic expressions are arranged in preposition to the discourse, they help the addressee to form a hypothesis regarding the topic of discourse so that the following sentences can be interpreted on this macrotopic top to bottom. If the signals are located in the postposition to the discourse, then they are used to check, recall and adjust the macrotopic already allocated by the recipient.

The above mentioned evaluative strategies are manifested and implemented with the help of tactics used at the level of single elements of discourse.

The following evaluative tactics should be mentioned:

- 1) nomination (creation of propositive names of events);

- 2) predication (correlation of propositive names with reality);
- 3) thematization (the binding of propositive meanings into a single whole);
- 4) stylization (selection of linguistic means supplying the discourse with necessary connotations in specific conditions of communication);
- 5) topical segmentation;
- 6) completeness of the sentence or other element of the discourse in the text continuum.

To illustrate the above mentioned statements let us consider the following example:

*"Soames watched him for a moment dance crazily on the pavement to his own drawling jagged sounds, then crossed over to avoid contact with this piece of drunken foolery... What asses people were!"* [24].

In this utterance the lexeme *drunken* retains its denotative meaning (drunk, intoxicated). This is the intensional of meaning, its obligatory attribute. But here we observe a shift of the attribute from the state of man to his behavior [25]. The recipient's attention is focused on a similar disposed attribute due to its originality and the discrepancy between the traditional and situational signifier (*piece of foolery of drunken man*).

In addition, the adjective *drunken*, while preserving a denotative meaning, implicates the pragmatic meaning of "condemnation" from Soames's side, a marker of which is the noun *ass*, which in this context has a negative meaning. Soames's inner monologue immediately places emphasis on "right – wrong," "good – bad," thereby explicating a negative evaluation speech strategy (*drunken foolery* is bad).

The following example also deserves consideration:

*"Lord Balcairn, said Lord Metroland, "will you kindly leave my house immediately?" ... "Oh, yes, I am going to", said Simon. "You didn't think I was going to go back to the party like this, did you?"* [26].

Structures like *will/would you* mean a request, sometimes used in the function of the invitation (proposal), thus forming the speech acts of the request or invitation. As for their grammatical and lexical design, it practically does not differ from the formulas inherent to request.

The communicative aim of the analyzed utterance – to humiliate, set off the threshold of the home – is achieved by a number of language means: the beginning of the phrase is constructed in accordance with the tact maxim, observing the principle of politeness.

Explicitly this utterance is a polite request (a marker of which is the lexeme *kindly* which semantic structure contains positive evaluation semes), implicitly it is a rude order. The violation of the strategy of discourse is observed here, also there is a dissonance between locution and perlocution: the purpose of the utterance conflicts with the language means of its design.

Let us consider some more examples to demonstrate the work of evaluative strategies and tactics in the discourse:

*"Michael lifted the bottle to his lips and took a good mouthful. He felt a sharp burning sensation in his throat and then a warmth in his gut. "How do you like it?"*

*Lawrence asked. "Just the thing for morning tea on high seas," Michael said*" [27].

The utterance is an example of an implicit expression of a positive assessment by means of the indirect reference. The lack of the manifestation of elements of the situation is explained by the implication, as one of the main forms of nomination and by the desire to save language units.

The implication can be both a signal of the speaker's corresponding attitude to any phenomenon, and the embodiment of a speaker's special communicative strategy (to convince the interlocutor of the excellent taste of the drink). The implication is a comparison of the contents of the bottle with a wonderful vacation on the coast of the sea.

*"At the bottom of the stairs he ran into the tall fellow with the broad-brimmed hat, who was just coming out of his "Kwik-Work Razor Blade" place. The tall nodded. "Turning colder". "Just a bit", replied Mr. Smeeth heartily. These little encounters and recognitions pleased him, making him feel that he was somebody. "Not so bad, though, for the time of year." "That's right. Business good?" "So-so. Not so good as it might be". And then Mr. Smeeth let the tall man stride away down Angel Pavement, for he remembered that he was out of tobacco and so turned into the neighbouring shop, the one occupied by T. Benenden"* [28].

Here we observe a description of a typical communicative act between strangers. An implicit assessment is based on paralinguistic components, namely: the addresser (*the tall man*) nods in greeting (a kinesic means). His next micro-speech act corresponds to the communicative perspective of the paralinguistic component used by him and is of a general nature, that is, does not express specific information (*small talk*).

The purpose of this micro-speech act is to get rid of the interlocutor as soon as possible. However, the addressee (*Mr. Smeeth*) has already deciphered the actual intent of the addressee (the explicator of which is the paralinguistic component used by him), and has developed a macrostrategy of his behavior.

The presence of a specialized, explicit means of expressing a negative value (a negative particle *not*) increases the clarity and comprehensibility of the thought implicitly expressed in the dialogue: *"I am an important person and I can keep you waiting as much as I consider it necessary"*. Confirmation of the presence of such an implication is the phrase *"making him feel that he was somebody"*.

*"Morning, Stanley, " he said, not very cheerfully. "Hello, " said Stanley, in the toneless voice of one who expects nothing. ... "You'll stop in and do a bit of work, my son, for a change. Do you good". "What work?" demanded Stanley with scorn"* [28].

The presented dialogue is a real communicative act in which the greater part of informative and factual information is transmitted with the help of non-verbal means of communication (*not very cheerfully*).

The addresser (*he*) determines the strategy of his communicative behavior with the phonation paralinguistic component – the prosody of verbal utterance.

The addressee (*Stanley*) reveals the intention of the addresser – to make him work – and on the basis of this paralinguistic component he develops a strategy for his communicative behavior that meets the content of the latter. Confirmation of this is the last sentence of this dialogue containing the lexeme *scorn*, which has a negative meaning.

The list of strategies and tactics of the evaluative discourse can be continued, because discourse is a product of speech,

### 3. CONCLUSION

Under the modern paradigm of not only linguistic, but also universal knowledge, the discourse which cannot be precisely defined yet becomes a key notion. Or, even, should there be any definition within the system of current knowledge which is being broadened every day and which, presumably, is expected to give us new results in comprehension of the language existence and performance.

From the point of view of functional and stylistic differentiation, the following types of evaluative discourse should be distinguished:

- 1) fiction discourse, represented by literary works;
- 2) media discourse (journalistic, mass media), within the framework of which mainly texts written by journalists and disseminated through the press, television, radio, the Internet are investigated;
- 3) scientific discourse, which includes texts created by scientists (scientific articles, researches, etc.);
- 4) religious discourse, which is a set of oral and written texts which form religious communication.

Like any other, the evaluative discourse has a field structure. Those genres that contribute to the main purpose of discourse are in its center. So the core of the evaluative discourse will make fiction discourse as “the most relevant to the goals, values and social functions of the discourse, as well as having the large number of connections with the texts of other varieties of this discourse”.

In peripheral genres, the main function and characteristics of the evaluative discourse are interwoven with the functions and characteristics of other types of discourse within the same text. The near periphery is thus represented by the genres of media discourse.

On the far periphery of the evaluative discourse there is a scientific discourse, as well as texts created by ordinary citizens who, not being professional journalists, writers and preachers, occasionally participate in the communication process. These texts can be various kinds of letters and appeals addressed to politicians or state institutions, letters to the media, everyday conversations. Such texts are in the sphere of intersection of evaluative and everyday discourses.

The boundaries between these varieties of the evaluative discourse are not quite clear, and we often have to observe their mutual intersection.

which is the embodiment of the process of displaying of the worldview in our mind, which is impossible without the cooperation of the linguistics with related humanities (psycholinguistics, logic, sociology) etc.).

The study of contemporary evaluative discourse is possible in several aspects, which differ according to the angle from which the main problem is studied:

- a) from the cultural and historical position the conditions of continuity and changes in the historical interpretation of ecological relations are considered;
- b) from the natural science point of view the question about the regularities in the relationship between living beings and the environment is studied;
- c) from the philosophical position the features of evaluative thinking are investigated;
- d) from the esthetic position the perception of relations between individuals is studied;
- e) from the ethical point of view, in practical discourses the normativity of individual and collective communication between the outer reality and a person is studied.

Thus, evaluative strategies and tactics in discourse are closely related to various communicative intentions and illocutionary forces and create a special intensional context. They form the conceptual integrity of discourse and allow expressing more than words mean and embody non-speech, subject (situational) or spiritual (evaluative), interaction of interlocutors, the meta-meaning of communication. This is their pragmatic purpose. A comparative study of the functioning of evaluative strategies and tactics is very perspective.

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